



MSDE Education Bulletin, June 30, 2015

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MONTGOMERY PARENT IS 2015 PIMA STATE HONOREE

Andrew Niebler of Montgomery County this month was named statewide winner of the eighth annual Maryland Parent Involvement Matters Awards (PIMA) program.



Andrew Niebler, a volunteer at Montgomery County's Westland Middle School, is this year's Maryland Parent Involvement Matters Award Winner.

Niebler, a volunteer at Westland Middle School, developed the Westland Cares program, designed to help students and their families gain stability by providing goods and services to those in need. It has the added effect of helping them feel welcome in their community. Westland Cares began as a holiday card-giving effort but quickly expanded to include a food and household item pantry, a holiday gift-giving and wrapping program, scholarships for afterschool activities, book fair certificates, and more.

"Andrew has never looked for a quick fix ...it has always been about neighbors connecting with neighbors," said Alison Serino, principal of Westland Middle.

"A secondary gift of Andrew's work with Westland Cares is the consciousness he has raised with other families. He calls on neighbors to help, and they do not disappoint."

Niebler was selected among the five finalists announced at the gala awards ceremony at Martin's West. The finalists were narrowed down from a list of 24 semifinalists announced earlier this month. The other finalists were:

- Joseph Cline, Holly Hall Elementary School, Cecil County
- June McClosky, Southern Garrett High School, Garrett County
- Sharmella Riggs, Leonardtown High School, St. Mary's County
- Stephanie Truitt-Drimal, Cedar Chapel Special School, Worcester County

"Parents and other volunteers make an important difference in the success of our students," said Governor Larry Hogan. "I would like to congratulate all of the finalists for their continued involvement and significant contributions to Maryland's students, schools and communities."

State Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery noted that parent involvement is critical to Maryland's educational success.

"Andrew Niebler saw a need, filled it, and then found new ways to improve that initiative," Dr. Lowery said.

"Strong parental involvement strengthens our classrooms and schools, and Andrew never stops working to make Westland Middle better for students and the community. His commitment inspires us all."

PIMA is the nation's first and only statewide award program of its kind, honoring parents and guardians for their critical work. The PIMA Program recognizes parents from local school systems across the State of Maryland, nominated for their contributions in one or more of the five areas of parental involvement: Communication; Volunteering; Learning; Decision Making; and Community Collaboration.

Many of the honorees from previous years have become parent involvement advocates on the statewide level – serving as members of task forces, presenters at statewide meetings, and participants in education conventions as well as focus groups.

The PIMA Program is supported by: Martin's West, BGE, Comcast, Rudolph's Office and Computer Supply, Maryland PTA, Cullins Trucking, Inc., Harvest Enterprises, Inc., The Mid Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc., and Target.

OPTIONAL COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS TESTS ADOPTED

The Maryland State Board of Education last week approved two State exams that can be used by local systems to assess a student's college and career readiness by the end of 11th grade.

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) tests in algebra II and English 11 can be used by Maryland school systems next school year for college and career ready determination. Systems also may opt to use the SAT, ACT, Accuplacer or other assessments.

The Maryland College and Career-Readiness and College Completion Act of 2013 requires that all juniors be assessed on their readiness for college or career. If a test determines that there are some deficiencies, the student may be enrolled in a transition course or experience during their senior year.

State Board members also recommended some additional PARCC developed tests that school systems have the option to use. In addition to Algebra II and English 11, there are new PARCC exams in English 9 and Geometry. None of these assessments are required, and students do not need to pass them for graduation.

A few words from State Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery



State Superintendent of Schools
Lillian M. Lowery

Summer is here, but the learning doesn't stop. Maryland again this year is offering a diverse selection of high-level programs targeting many of our State's top students.

The 2015 Maryland Summer Centers Program, which began last week, continues a 48-year commitment at the State level to provide summer educational opportunities for Maryland's gifted and talented students. The program, coordinated through the Maryland State Department of Education, in partnership with public and nonpublic agencies, provides Maryland's diverse gifted and talented student population with advanced, rigorous, experiential learning opportunities that nurture these students' talents and abilities within unique learning environments. Nine centers are being held this summer.

Among this year's centers is a new one, currently taking place at Baltimore City Community College. The Center for Biotechnology and Forensic Science allows students to follow evidence, perform DNA analysis and solve a variety of mysteries just like the professionals. The nonresidential program for students in grades 8-9 will use a state-of-the-art laboratory environment for learning fundamental biotechnology and forensic science techniques. This new center is funded by the Baltimore City Community College.

More about the Maryland Summer Center program can be found [here](#).

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Teachers also are students again this year, as the regional Maryland College and Career

Readiness Conferences have been taking place since June 18.

The conferences are designed to ensure that educators are supported in their professional learning needs for implementing the State's more rigorous standards. More than 3,000 educators are taking part in the two-day conferences, which run through July 9.

Additional information about the Maryland College and Career Readiness Conferences can be found [here](#).

Video Highlights

2015 PIMA Awards Night

June 5, 2015

Montgomery County's Andrew Niebler wins the 2015 Maryland Parent Involvement Matters Award. See the winning announcement at Martin's West, and learn about the other finalists, at the gala that celebrates the two dozen parents from all Maryland jurisdictions.



MSDE Video Highlights: 2015 PIMA Awards Night, June 5, 2015

2015 PIMA Finalists and Winner Videos

[Andrew Niebler](#)

Westland Middle School, Montgomery County

[Joseph Cline](#)

Holly Hall Elementary School, Cecil County

[June McClosky](#)

Southern Garrett High School, Garrett County

Sharmella Riggs

Leonardtown High School, St. Mary's County

Stephanie Truitt-Drimal

Cedar Chapel Special School, Worcester County

Calendar

June 28 - July 1 - Maryland Municipal League Convention, Ocean City

July 28 - Maryland State Board of Education meeting, Baltimore

In the News

Maryland Officials Gather to Address School Safety

WBAL-TV

School Organization Provides Food Security

Montgomery Gazette

Editorial: Yes, There is Such a Thing as Free Lunch

Salisbury Daily Times

Moten Elementary Volunteer Wins Carroll County's PIMA Award

Carroll County Times

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